that seems to belong to the dim and distant future.

PALESTINE AND THE JEWS.

A NEW era seems to be dawning for the ancient land of Palestine. The railroad recently opened for traffic between its chief seaport and its historic capital is the latest step, and a very important one, in the march of progress in the Holy Land. The post office is an institution already established there, and said to be improving in its efficiency. The telegraph is another modern introduction. Jerusalem is said to be taking on some of the characteristics of Western cities. It is enjoying a veritable "boom"—sacrilegious as the word may sound in such a connection. Its population is rapidly growing, and its real estate is becoming valuable property. The French company that built the Jaffa and Jerusalem railway had to pay three thousand dollars an acre for land for its terminus a mile beyond the limits of the city. Six years ago Jerusalem had about 30,000 inhabitants; it is now said to have 80,000, more than it has ever had since the legions of Titus destroyed it in the year 70. Elsewhere in the country further railroad enterprises are contemplated, and one, a line across Galilee from Haifa to Damascus, has already been begun.

This awakening of a new life in the long desolate kingdom of David and Solomon attracts a fresh interest to the project of recolonizing it with the descendants of its ancient dwellers. It presents the idea of a Jewish return to Palestine in a more practical and attractive aspect.

For eighteen centuries the Hebrew race has been more or less completely barred from the land to which Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees. When Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem, and raised on the site of the Temple a fane for the worship of Capitoline Jupiter, he forbade the Jews to come within a certain distance of the city, on pain of death. Under the Christian emperors they were permitted to enter only once a year, and on payment of a sum of money—a supposed expiation of the crucifixion of Christ. Neither the Turks, who conquered Palestine in the eleventh century, nor the Crusaders, who for a time wrested it from them, permitted the return of the Hebrews to the country from which the Romans had driven them. Until recently the Sultan allowed only a small number of Jews to live there, and prohibited them from acquiring land.

About twelve years ago these restrictions were removed; and there has since been a considerable influx of Hebrew settlers. There are now more than a hundred thousand Jews in Palestine, and it is said that they are coming in increasing numbers.

In England, in France, and in Germany there is a vast concentration of capital in the hands of members of the race, many of whom are ready to forward any great project for the benefit of their kinsmen. Baron Hirsch, who has already spent millions in transporting from Russia the oppressed Hebrew subjects of the Czar, is said to be considering Palestine as a new field for his colossal schemes of philanthropy. He declared not long ago that he was ready to expend a hundred million dollars to assist the emigration of the four million Jews now in Russia. Members of such great Hebrew houses as those of Rothschild, Goldsmid, and Montefiore are undoubtedly ready to coöperate with him. His efforts have hitherto been directed toward the New World; but in South America his schemes of colonization have been far from entirely successful, and in the United States his protégés are not welcomed. It is natural that he should turn to Palestine, and not unlikely that he may do better there.

Centuries of a condition approaching desolation have greatly changed the aspect of the land that once flowed with milk and honey, and changed it for the worse. But its soil and climate are still the same as they were when it was Solomon's prosperous and powerful kingdom. Tabor and Carmel still stand, and the rapid stream of Jordan still waters its deep valley. Aridity is the great foe of agriculture, but that aridity can be overcome as the Hebrews of old overcame it. Wells can be dug, and reservoirs built for the "early and the latter rain." Indeed, modern methods of irrigation, such as the French have successfully applied in Algiers and the English in Egypt, can give Palestine a fertility it never had, and make its plains as productive artificially as its valleys are naturally. It can be made a land for grain, fruit, sheep, and cattle; its ancient cities and harbors can be rebuilt, and ships may bring to its ports a richer traffic than that of Ophir.

All over the world there is repeated in the Jewish synagogues the prayer for the final ingathering to the Holy Land and the rebuilding of the Temple on Mount Moriah. To a certain extent, the prayer has lost its

original and literal meaning. The Hebrews of such a country as the United States, it is safe to say, have no thought of actually going back to the land of their fathers. The traditional idea of the return of Israel, as the *Jewish Messenger* remarks, "is held as a theory like that of the millennium among our Protestant brethren, who are in no hurry, however, to abandon Wall Street, the Standard Oil Company, and Western mortgages in consequence."

The Jews in America are not likely to go to Palestine. Here they possess absolute civil and religious equality, have their full share of the civilization of the day, and enjoy advantages that the land of Abraham cannot offer. So too is it with their kinsmen in the leading countries of western Europe. But in eastern and southeastern Europe, where still reside the great numerical majority of the race, the case is very different. There are four million Jews in Russia to whom emigration to Palestine would be a release from grievous governmental oppression; and they are enough to repeople that ancient land with a larger population than it ever had.

Palestine is, within its narrowest limits, of an area exactly equal to that of Maryland, while its present population is only a quarter of Maryland's. There is room there for a powerful Jewish state, to whose autonomy the feeble sovereignty of the Turkish Sultan would be a weak barrier. Of such a state the next generation may see the birth.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

ONE of the greatest of recent changes in the general attitude of mankind toward religious subjects is seen in the increasing tendency to regard churches as something more than meeting places for worship. Different sects, of course, take different attitudes on this as on other questions; but the tendency is everywhere more or less visible. The church building is no longer kept locked for six days in the week, to be opened on the seventh for two formal services. Only in these latter days have we learned the full meaning of the divine founder of Christianity's saying that the Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath. So also churches are for man, not man for the churches. Man has not lost his respect for sacred things; he has gained a loftier view point by learning the supreme dignity of the role his Creator has given him. His metaphysical ideals have not sunk; he himself has risen.

Today he sees in the church not an end in itself but a means to an end. All that tends to the ennobling of his nature belongs to it. Without losing its purely religious aspect, it has become a center of multifarious good agencies. It is the great focus of charitable benevolence. It does much for education, intellectual and even physical. It has more and more developed its social side, and looks with approval upon innocent amusements and all forms of mutual helpfulness.

This development has naturally reached its highest point in the great cities, always the leaders in such departures; and it has proceeded much further with some denominations than with others. The Unitarians and Universalists, for instance, generally avow that their ecclesiastical ideal is a "religious clubhouse." "The old style church," a Boston Unitarian recently said, "reminds me more of a huge tomb than anything else, which is open one day in the week for grown people who leave joy behind them and for children who carry their fears with them." It would not be fair to regard this description as of universal application; but that it has been true in too many cases cannot be denied.

From a similar source comes a sketch of what its projector regards as "the church of the future." Instead of a place for stated and settled worship, it is to be a central point of meeting for all its members, every day and evening of the week, with social attractions of all kinds, such as reading and lecture rooms, rooms or parlors for conversation, gymnasium, library, and in the lecture room a stage for theatrical entertainments of the right kind. It is, in fact, to be a social club, with the addition of beneficial features that ordinary clubs cannot secure.

"The minister's place in this church," continues the writer, "should be not only that of leader and instructor, but that of an active, working member. The place of the church member should be that of helper to the minister and promoter of all the methods adopted to secure the ends desired. The old style prayer meetings and relations of personal experience would give way to cheerful, entertaining, and instructive readings, recitations and discussions on questions of the day, on matters that the speakers knew something about or about which they could be informed by those who did know. The religion of cheerfulness, of enjoyment, of learning something new and useful, of cultivating the moral nature, of encouragement in do-